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RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR PRIORITY 0116  
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RUEHKI/AMEMBASSY KINSHASA PRIORITY 0023  
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RUEHLU/AMEMBASSY LUANDA PRIORITY 0043  
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY 0087  
RUEHNM/AMEMBASSY NIAMEY PRIORITY 0127  
RUEHWD/AMEMBASSY WINDHOEK PRIORITY 0043  
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RUEHTO/AMEMBASSY MAPUTO PRIORITY 0175  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 MADRID 000336

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
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EUR/WE FOR ANGELA CERVETTI  
YAOUNDE FOR MALABO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/23/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [SP](#) [XA](#)

SUBJECT: SPANISH ASSISTANCE IN AFRICA: NOT THE SAME AS PLAN  
AFRICA

REF: 2006 MADRID 1966

MADRID 00000336 001.2 OF 003

Classified By: DCM Hugo Llorens for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: Following on the 2006 conversations and correspondence between Assistant Secretary Frazer and Spanish Director General Alvaro Iranzo, Emboffs met February 20 with Cristina Diaz Fernandez-Gil, Deputy Director General for Spanish International Cooperation in Africa and Asia, to discuss avenues for possible bilateral cooperation in Sub-Saharan Africa. According to Diaz (PLEASE PROTECT), Spanish development assistance priorities in Sub-Saharan Africa are divorced from Spanish foreign policy priorities. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' vaunted Plan Africa is primarily a foreign policy document and should not be interpreted as a directive for Spanish cooperation assistance. While Plan Africa overlaps to some extent with the "Plan Director" of the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation (AECI), AECI's assistance package is more limited and targeted in scope than the wide ranging diplomatic initiative. Nevertheless, Diaz expressed interest in possible bilateral collaboration/cooperation in Africa and asked for more details on U.S. programs and priorities. Spain's assistance budget in Sub-Saharan Africa has nearly tripled since 2004. END SUMMARY.

//ELEMENT, NOT INSTRUMENT//

12. (C) POLOFF and ESTOFF met with Cristina Diaz Fernandez-Gil, AECI's Deputy Director General for Africa and Asia, on February 20 to request more specific details of Spanish assistance priorities in Africa, with the end of identifying areas of mutual interest and potential bilateral cooperation. Embassy reporting (reftel) has interpreted the MFA's "Plan Africa" as a signal that Spain is increasing its

assistance and diplomatic presence in Sub-Saharan Africa, but Diaz told Emboffs that Spanish assistance priorities were set well before Plan Africa and have not changed significantly since the Plan's announcement. She characterized Plan Africa as primarily a foreign policy document and not an assistance directive. For example, she noted that Plan Africa lists Gabon and Nigeria as countries of concern for Spain, but Spain has no current or planned assistance involvement in either country.

13. (C) Diaz referenced AECI's "Plan Director" as the definitive document on AECI assistance, and she stated emphatically that AECI's assistance goals are an "element" of Spain's foreign policy, not an "instrument" of Spanish foreign policy. To that end, Spain's assistance goals are in line with the Millennium goals, countering hunger and poverty, increasing health and improving education. While Spain's recent problems with immigration have created a temptation to use foreign assistance as an enticement for countries to rein in their migrant populations, AECI firmly believes that assistance cannot stop migration in the short term; therefore, Diaz intimated that counter-migration initiatives remain under the purview of the MFA without significant input from AECI or its budget. She underlined that AECI interest in Senegal has long predated the recent diplomatic offensive in Dakar seeking a bilateral repatriation agreement.

//PRIORITY, SPECIAL ATTENTION, AND PREFERRED COUNTRIES//

14. (SBU) Diaz told Emboffs that Spanish cooperation in Africa is focused on 14 nations divided into three groups. Priority countries are those in which AECI has an office as well as a bilateral MoU on cooperation. These nations are Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, Senegal and Cape Verde.

MADRID 00000336 002.2 OF 003

Countries of special attention include Sudan, Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Mali, and Niger. Diaz said that Equatorial Guinea had been demoted to the second category due to its newfound oil wealth, and she said that Mali and Niger had only recently been added to AECI's agenda. Diaz called the third group "preferred countries" and said this category, which consists of South Africa and San Tome and Principe, included nations with pockets of overpopulation, poverty and hunger problems.

15. (SBU) Additionally, Diaz indicated that AECI has latitude to take timely action in the world's least developed countries and of course to provide humanitarian aid in times of crisis. In this category she included drought relief and health projects in Ethiopia and Kenya. Some of its international cooperation package takes the form of contributions to the EU, UN, UNHCR, UNDP, and the African Union. The EU has only recently begun focusing on pooling its resources to launch collaborative efforts in Africa, including in Mali, Ethiopia and Senegal. She also indicated that AECI is looking to increase its involvement with sub-regional African organizations, naming SADC and ECOWAS as examples. AECI's mandate does not include Spanish military assistance and debt forgiveness. Because Spain's assistance effort is relatively small compared to some actors, AECI has tried to maintain a concentrated and geographically-limited approach rather than overextending itself, though Diaz conceded that involvement in 14 Sub-Saharan African nations seems rather broad.

//HEALTH, EDUCATION, STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONS, WOMEN//

16. (SBU) Spain has traditionally focused on health and education, but Diaz said that this focus has expanded to include potable water and sanitation projects, food security, agriculture and fishing programs, and building institutional capacity. Spain has little in the way of environmental programs, though they are involved in small projects in

Kenya. Spain has worked on institution building in the health, education, administration, and justice sectors, and with the police in Mozambique. AECI has also paid for demining operations in both Angola and Mozambique, and it has provided some direct budget support in Mozambique (health sector), Namibia, Ethiopia, and Cape Verde. Lastly, Diaz noted that Vice President Fernandez de la Vega has launched an initiative for African women and will be celebrating this initiative at an event on March 8, International Women's Day.

//BUDGET NEARLY TRIPLED SINCE 2004//

17. (SBU) While Diaz did not have figures on hand for total Spanish assistance in Africa (including military support, debt relief, etc.), she said that AECI's planned budget for Sub-Saharan Africa for 2007 is 120 million euros, and she indicated that they would likely exceed that target. She highlighted a steady increase in aid for Sub-Saharan Africa since 2004 (2004 - 44 million, 2005 - 67 million, 2006 - 103 million) and suggested this constituted a trend.

//WORD OF CAUTION//

18. (SBU) ESToff concluded the meeting by asking whether AECI would be amenable to exploring areas for assistance coordination with USG, and Diaz said absolutely. However, she noted that, like any assistance agency, most of Spain's programs are formalized by bilateral MoU's with host governments which lay out three-year work plans. In countries with no AECI presence, the agency contracts with NGO's who in turn formalize their work plans with host

MADRID 00000336 003.2 OF 003

countries. Therefore, she asked for details of U.S. assistance programs and priorities in Africa as well as any ideas on avenues for bilateral cooperation. Emboffs agreed to relay the request to Washington.

19. (C) COMMENT: Emboffs were surprised to hear the discrepancy between MFA's gung-ho attitude on Plan Africa and Diaz's somewhat cooler assessment, considering that AECI forms part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation. More surprising, however, was Diaz's admission that she was completely unaware of the exchange of correspondence between the Secretary and Foreign Minister Moratinos, and between A/S Frazer and Director General Iranzo on bilateral cooperation in Africa. She indicated that neither Iranzo nor Sub-DG Antonio Sanchez-Benedito Gaspar had mentioned the idea to her, and she speculated that perhaps the bilateral discussions had been more geo-political and strategic in nature and less assistance-oriented. She said she would seek more information from Sanchez-Benedito. END COMMENT.

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